

British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

News FROM CHAPTER 159

By the time you receive this the Florida meeting will be history. I presented a preview of the Chapter sponsored slide/tape programs of English Bracket Clocks. By the way, I notice that Sotheby's now calls these table clocks, which is correct (as is the term spring clocks) but nonetheless it is a little bit annoying to those of us used to calling the earlier all-brass timepieces by that name.

Our April meeting at Fort Mitchell KY will feature an informal review of English chronometers by Clyde Brown. If you can, bring one to show at that meeting. It will take place at 2:10PM on Friday April 17th.

-Doug Cowan

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

will take place at the next Annual Meeting of the Chapter in Portland, OR in conjunction with the NAWCC National. Nominees received so far through January 1998 are:

For President, Douglas G. Cowan

For Vice-President, Thomas J. Spittler

For Secretary, Frank A. DelGreco

For Treasurer, Bernard L. Pollack

Please send your further nominations (including self-nominations) to Paul Odendahl, 340 S. Diamond St., New Orleans LA 70130; phone (evenings) 504-288-2479; fax 504-522-8724; e-mail peoden@webtv.net.

Take a moment and reflect on what the members of Chapter 159 have accomplished in 1997 by way of sharing their thoughts and abilities via articles in the chapter newsletter. You contributed no fewer than twelve erudite articles on British Horology. They fall into three categories: Technical, Travel, and Human Interest.

Technical articles were by far the greater number and ranged from fake Tompions to ropes, evaluating clocks, a Graham watch, books and more.

You told about Travel in Britain and your Human Interest stories ranged from the sentimental to the adventuresome. At least

one of your articles was reprinted in the NAWCC Bulletin.

And as if knowledgeable writing was not enough, you accompanied it with clear and detailed photographs that went right to the point of the article. There's no doubt that photographs are what the editors and publisher want because they are what readers like.

So what's for 1998? Just watch us. Because of the knowledge, the technical ability, the insight and the willingness to share that you collectively possess there is no limit to the interesting material that you can turn out. With your help in 1998 we will publish glad tidings of the same superiority.

-Paul Odendahl



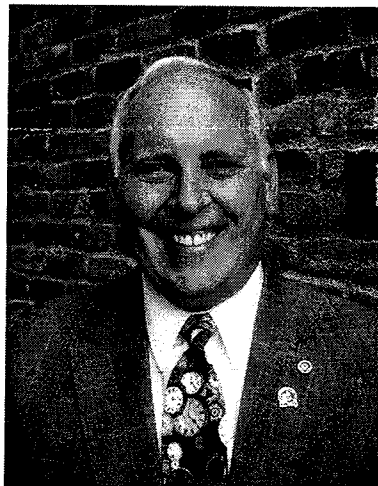
THE BIRTH OF A CHAPTER

What magical event happened in an airplane with unlimited sky above and tens of thousands of square miles of water below? **Paul Odendahl (LA)** explains how it came about and the results.

BRITISH HOROLOGY CHAPTER 159 CO-FOUNDERS



DOUGLAS G. COWAN



THOMAS J. SPITTLER

PROLOGUE

One day in September of 1991 the phone rang at Doug Cowan's home:

"Doug, this is Tom Spittler."

Now Doug and Tom were acquaintances, having met at meetings of the Buckeye Chapter 23 of NAWCC and they had discussed their mutual interest in the subject of English clocks from time to time at the meetings but they had never socialized or worked together.

"Doug, I propose that you and I make a trip to Britain. A clock oriented trip. I have some British connections and there will be antiques fairs next month. We can run around looking for clocks. No wives, no sightseeing, no fancy hotels or restaurants. What do you think?"

"Well, uh..."

There was more talk on the phone about what to do in Britain. Doug was at a low point in his horological life. He was clock hibernating. Tom was eager and raring to go. The phone call ended with,

"Think about it, Doug, and let me know."

In the end, Tom's enthusiasm was contagious. It might be, Doug thought, just what I need, so in short order he phoned Tom and they worked out the details of when and how. In truth, Tom had the details already worked out and all Doug had to do was agree.

CONCEPTION

On a sunny Tuesday morning, October 15, 1991 Tom Spittler

drove from Dayton to meet Doug Cowan in Cincinnati for their direct Delta Airlines flight to London Gatwick. Settling back in their seats for the long ride and with nothing else to do, the two had an extended horological conversation. Tom had notes about what antiques fairs to visit, what shops, and it turned out that Tom owned eight longcase clocks which were in Manchester. Then, as a sort of appendage to the trip itinerary, the subject of this article came up. They both agreed that there was mounting interest in English clocks in the U.S. yet there was no real means for the exchange of views and there was much misinformation about English clocks. Why not, then, form a chapter — not a regional chapter, but an international one devoted to the study and the dissemination of

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Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Chapter and/or by the newsletter and/or by the National Association.

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British Horology Chapter 159

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knowledge about English clocks and watches? Name it the British Horology Chapter. There would be much work to start and to keep a new chapter going. They knew that. Tom was busy establishing a new business but Doug had retired and had time to do most of the work. Thus on a journey aimed at the pursuit of clocks and horology, in a jet aircraft, over the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, on October 15, 1991, British Horology Chapter 159 of the National Association of Clock and Watch Collectors was conceived. Not born — conceived. Birth came later, as we shall see. Tom says it was an international idea, conceived at an international location.

GESTATION

Day 1. Jet lag. Arrival around 9AM on October 16, 1991 at Gatwick. The farthest thing from the minds of Tom and Doug was the new chapter idea. They picked up a self-drive Ford estate car (station wagon) at Gatwick (arranged in advance). Doug's first candidate for purchase was a satinwood longcase clock, ca 1770. But Doug was not sure. Tom said, "Buy it!" as they sped off to Winchester in search of more clocks. Gerald Marsh of Winchester had a suitable box which he exchanged for a £5 donation to his favorite charity. They spent the night at a bed and breakfast in Winchester and the first thing the next morning Doug phoned the seller of the satinwood clock to lock up the deal.

Day 2. Jet lag was getting worse. Gerald's empty box was fitted with difficulty into the estate car and

off they went to get the clock. Its owner, closed and about to leave for Majorca, made a special effort to open for the sale. Back to Gatwick with the satinwood clock safely packed in Gerald's box. The forwarding agent proved to be difficult and at one point he had the clock and Doug's money and Doug had nothing. Bed and breakfast at Gatwick, but not before Doug had purchased a Jerome giant fusee steeple clock which Tom to this day feels had to be a plant. On the plane Doug had mentioned that there were giant fusee steeple clocks in England and that he would like to find and buy one. Tom had never heard of or seen such a thing. At the first shop they visited (which was closed) Doug pointed out the giant steeple clock and said it had to be a fusee. A day later he bought it. Tom was in disbelief.

Day 3. To Bermondsey in London. Due to the effects of the still-felt jet lag and the effort to arise in time for a 4 AM arrival at Bermondsey (at which point Doug was truly seeing double), they committed a magnificent error: they parked illegally. Empty handed and full pursed they returned to the spot where they had parked the estate car to find — it had disappeared. The sign said,

IMPOUNDMENT FEE £105

and that plus the towing charge plus the £30 taxi ride to the pound address amounted to about £250.

Thank goodness that nothing was bought at Bermondsey so this amount didn't have to be added to the cost.

Day 4. To Norfolk. Tom has a friend there named Clive who is a builder and an antique dealer. Tom owned a corner cupboard which had been stored at Clive's since 1987.

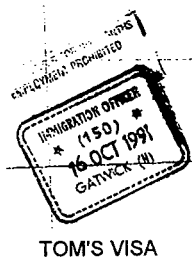
They went to an auction viewing in a town named Diss and they visited an RAF Base where Tom had worked as a Lt. Colonel. Clive lives in a thatched roof cottage and offered his hospitality to Tom and Doug. They were given a lovely attic bedroom with the added distinction that the roof leaked. It didn't rain that day or that night but there was mold galore. Doug slept on the narrow moldy bed and ruined his clothes. Tom slept on the floor which one might think safer but for the fact that there were mice running around during the night.

Day 5. On to Manchester and Bob's place. Bob is another of Tom's friends and Tom had come for his eight longcase clocks which Bob was storing for him. The day was spent with Bob and they all had a chance to visit for 2 hours an antiques fair in Newark. This was exceptional for Tom who generally allowed 2½ minutes for a look at a shop and all of 5 minutes for an antique mall. To use time even more efficiently, Tom frequently would not stop for lunch. That evening, in spite of their original vow of frugality and because of the memory of the previous night's mice and mold, they treated themselves to a night at a luxurious hotel.

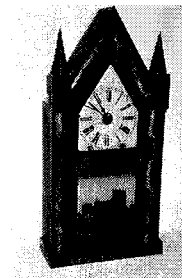
Day 6. A visit to Coventry clock fair where Doug sold all the watches he had brought from America. Then back to Gatwick again to arrange for shipment of the clocks that Doug bought:

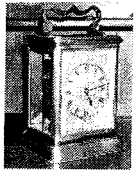
The Satinwood Longcase Clock by Edmond Scholfield, Rockdale near Manchester, ca 1770.

Chauncey Jerome giant fusee steeple clock, New Haven CT, ca 1845



TOM'S VISA





English Carriage Clock by Finer & Nowland, London, ca 1840.

And what did Tom buy to ship back? Nothing — his eight longcase clocks and his corner cupboard are still in Manchester.

Day 7. Return flight back to the US.

Those were the first seven days of the pregnancy. There were many more. The gestation period was 16 months.

For the last three or four of those 16 months work was going on in Ohio. Tom was writing By-Laws and Code of Regulation and working things out with NAWCC headquarters. There were three co-founders: Douglas G. Cowan, Lehr L. Dircks and Thomas J. Spittler. These were the three who signed the original papers on January 31, 1993. Then the Chapter Formation Petition was signed by 42 NAWCC members and NAWCC headquarters approved the Petition on March 5, 1993.

PARTURITION

So on March 5, 1993, British Horology Chapter 159 was born.

In retrospect Tom says, "I brought up the idea to Doug on the plane in an offhand manner. At that time the idea sort of died and I

didn't think anything more about it until sometime later when Doug came back to me and said we should act on it and form the chapter."



EPILOGUE

Right after the chapter got started (was born) there was more work to do. We needed to have tax-free status. A corporation for the chapter was formed in the state of Ohio. This required a \$25 fee and Doug found it to be far easier to get than the federal "tax free educational corporation". Between the time of the Ohio incorporation and the obtaining of the federal tax-free status, there was a period of time, as Tom points out, when we were taxable by the IRS because the federal filing for tax-free status cost \$150 and we didn't have it. So the feds said we had a profit of the few dollars in our treasury and the tax due was \$8.00 Doug just paid the \$8.00 to the feds and for that brief time we were a tax paying profit-

able Ohio corporation according to the IRS. Shortly thereafter we raised the \$150 and applied for the federal tax-free educational corporation. The IRS then wanted to know things that kept Doug busy like: answers to financial questions; wanted more trustees; wanted to know the educational benefits, and so on. Doug was up to the task and we finally did receive federal tax-free status. It is true and perhaps not very well known that donations to the chapter are tax deductible.

The first chapter newsletter, BHT1, was published in April 1993. At the bottom of page 5 is a portion of its first page.

Tom writes chapter news for the NAWCC Bulletin and this generates some new members and a lot of questions. Tom and Doug answer each and every question that comes in.

Chapter meetings are held three times a year with the endeavor to keep them low key and informal and to make them a resource for people to ask questions and learn. ☺

Paul Odendahl,
co-editor and
publisher of your
newsletter likes
to blend horology
and history.



National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Inc.

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March 5, 1993

#29403
Mr. Doug G. Cowan
110 Central Ter.
Cincinnati, OH 45215

Dear Doug:

NAWCC Council has approved your petition to form NAWCC Chapter #159, to be known as BRITISH HOROLOGY. You will be receiving your charter separately.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE	DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
DISTRICT DIRECTOR	
P. O. BOX 2608	
CINCINNATI, OH 45201	
Date: SEP 07 1994	Employer Identification Number: 31-1381580
	Case Number: 3141a0003
BRITISH HOROLOGY, CHAPTER 159 OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WATCH AND CLOCK COLLECTORS, INC.	Contact Person: JOSEPH LAUX
C/O D.G. COWAN	Contact Telephone Number: (513) 684-3878
110 CENTRAL TERRACE	
CINCINNATI, OH 45215	Accounting Period Ending: December 31
	Form 990 Required: Yes
	Addendum Applies: No
Dear Applicant:	
Based on information supplied and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from Federal Income Tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3).	
We have further determined that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code, because you are an organization described in section 509(a)(2).	
If your sources of support, or your purposes, character, or method of operation change, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on your exempt status and foundation status. In the case of an amend-	

RECOIL



David Penney (UK) writes about Graham No. 5277

I have been researching the work of Thomas Mudge and his master George Graham for many years and can report that the number places the date of this watch, judging by my list of numbers and hallmarks of surviving Graham watches, at ca 1727-28. This makes it a very early example of the cylinder escapement.

The casemaker WS (William Sherwood -*Editor*) is known to have supplied cases for Graham at this time and, though unusual, the fact that silver cases are not always hallmarked at this time is not uncommon in the first half of the 18th century.

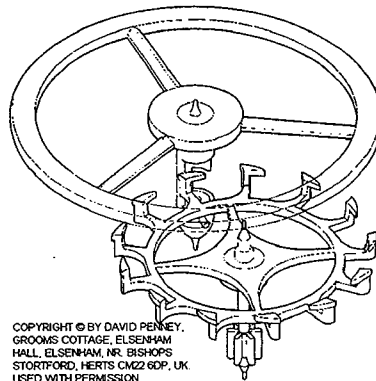
The single case is a style that Graham used for many of his watches at this period. Once nice feature that you picked out is the cranked minute hand — so nice that they have been known to be stolen at auction viewing days.

Another point to note is the use of a one-piece champlève dial used by Graham and later by Mudge.

Most that are seen at this time, on watches by other makers, are made with the usual separate center piece allowing the fitting of different decorations, with different (mostly retailers) names.

The style and engraving of the movement is also typical of Graham's work at this time, especially the asymmetrical, unpierced cock foot and the use of a "human" face instead of the normal grotesque mask at the neck of the cock. Caps came into use with the advent of the cylinder escapement.

Not mentioned or shown in the pictures is Graham's method of providing banking. This was done with a pin situated at the bottom of the steel cylinder shell that banked on a gilt or steel stud let into the potence. (See my illustration.)



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HALL, ELSENHAM, NR. BISHOPS
STORTFORD, HERTS CM22 6DP, UK.
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CYLINDER ESCAPEMENT OF
GRAHAM WATCH NO. 5319

Many such watches have suffered at the hands of later repairers where the worn cylinder is replaced with an already hardened cylinder that did not allow the drilling and fitting of a pin. Banking is then usually achieved by putting a pin in the balance and pin(s) in the table or neck of the cock. When done badly this can often mean a pin through the nose of the engraved face, or worse, the edge of the cock being filed to provide banking.

Lastly, the revolving pendant is mentioned which is certainly original and, as always, well detailed on Graham's single cased watches but the bow, as shown, is later. It should also be said that 18th century watch pendants were made to revolve but that most have since been soldered tight, no doubt to counteract excessive wear that would have happened during extensive use.

One point about watch nomenclature. The correct names for the different parts of a watch are not the same as a clock and if the latter are used it can create confusion: A watch has two plates, the Pillar Plate and the Potence (if it has one) Plate. Another name for the potence plate is the Upper or Top Plate. A dial is (usually) attached to the pillar plate by the Brass Edge. It is called this in watches because the dial, if enamel, is fired onto a copper or gold Dial Plate. If fitted with a cover the proper name is a Cap. If just a ring around the movement's edge it is called a Rim Cap. "Dust cover" or "dust cap" are recent inventions coined by certain auction house so-called "experts". ☺

-David Penney



BRITISH HOROLOGY TIMES, NAWCC Chapter 159, Apr.'93, #1

The British Horology Chapter, #159 has been approved by the NAWCC, and separately as a not-for-profit corporation, by the State of Ohio. Membership stands at 50, enough to cover our startup costs, but we will be able to do more projects and provide more services as membership grows. Please encourage your NAWCC friends to join by calling or writing to me* Also, we will hold our first meeting at the NAWCC national convention in Dallas. Time and location should be provided in the convention program. I hope to see many of you there.
*phone 513-8217569

CHAPTER LOGO

This is an invitation to submit ideas or sketches for a distinctive logo to be used by our chapter, for the newsletter, our correspondence, etc. For now, member Sonya Spittler has created a crossed British/American flags motif because the national convention requested one. However this probably needs

**WANTED**

William Joos would like to borrow a chamfer top bracket clock to make an accurate reproduction. Or if you have a chamfer top case, or a complete clock for sale, he is interested. (*Editor's note: Chamfer top can be seen on page 258, English Domestic Clocks by Cescinsky & Webster.*)
William Joos, 2617 Columbus Way, St. Petersburg FL 33712

WANTED

Clive Osborne is preparing a second edition of *Essex Clock & Watch Makers*. He would appreciate anyone having information about an Essex clock or watch passing it to him. If quality photographs can be provided all the better. Include any documentation about the piece such as dial size, movement details, etc. and any history. The major places in Essex are Billercay, Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Chipping Ongar, Chigwell, Coggs Hill, Colchester, Dunmow, Epping, Enfield, Inglestone, Maldon, Manningtree, Ramford, Rochford, Saffron Waldon, Southminster, Sudbury, Thaxted, Upminster, Walthamstow, Waltham Abbey, Wetston and Witham.

Clive Osborne, Unit 1, R/O Bosworth House, High Street, Thorpe-la-Soken, Essex CO16 0EA, UK

MORE RECOIL

Ken Johnston (NY)

suggests additional books

I would like to add to Tom Spittler's list of UK Regional Books which was published in the November 1997 BHT13:

Northern England. *Clockmakers of Northern England* by Brian Loomes.

Earlsdon, Coventry. *Brown Boots in Earlsdon* by Mary Montes.

Devon Clocks and Clockmakers by C.N. Ponsford.

Kent Clocks and Clockmakers by Michael Pearson.

Lancashire. *The Lancashire Watch Company, Prescott, Lancashire, 1889-1910* by Alan Smith. Sadly, this book is no longer in print.

Stirling. *Old Stirling Clockmakers* by Charles Allen.

A regional book was the source of enlightenment for me regarding who actually made a watch. I was introduced to old English

pocket watches by my friend Eric over 40 years ago. One of my early acquisitions was a handsome silver pair case verge with markings by Wm. Mason, Warwick. The case was hallmarked Birmingham 1813 and the maker's mark WH (William Howard, Coventry, 3 Feb. 1813). Neither Baillie or Britten had a reference that matched and I assumed that William Mason had made the watch and was not recorded.

About 10 years ago I visited the Warwickshire Museum in Warwick, and discovered Wilfred Seaby's *Clockmakers of Warwick and Leamington* which had a good profile of William Mason. He had a shop in Jury Street from 1811 to the early 1830s when he moved to Leamington. He had contracts for cleaning and maintaining church clocks between 1813 and 1834. A longcase clock bearing his name surfaced in an antique shop in 1979. In 1835 he was at 29 Regent Street in Leamington and in one census he is listed as a jeweler. With all this detail this is not the profile of a man who makes watches and I think that this was a contract watch which does not detract from its quality, but it would be nice to know who were the craftsmen who made this watch. 🕒

-Ken Johnston

MARCH 5, 1998

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



CHAPTER 159
you're 5 years old

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